

# CHUCKANUT DRIVE & Inspiration Point



Remnants of Gates' original lookout, crafted with rough-hewn local stone. Built in the "Rustic Style," the Inspiration Point overlook design was coordinated with the rock walls and other landscape features within Woodstock Farm.

– Photo courtesy of Whatcom Museum

add: rough hewn local stone, remain today.

## CHUCKANUT DRIVE & INSPIRATION POINT

Cyrus Gates and C.X. Larrabee were instrumental in the creation of Chuckanut Drive. Officially opened in 1916 as part of the Pacific Highway, the scenic drive was popular with motorists from the start.

Woodstock Farm was bisected by Chuckanut Drive, and Gates built a public-access overlook at Inspiration Point the southern-most end of his property. As automobile tourism gained popularity, scenic turnouts emerged across the country as an amenity for the new tourist traffic. Gates followed suit, turning Inspiration Point into a wayside for travelers to stop and enjoy the scenic vista of Chuckanut Bay.

When Chuckanut Drive opened in 1916, it was a dirt road. By 1921, paving extended all the way to Chuckanut State Park, established in 1915 as Washington's first state park. Chuckanut State Park was renamed Larrabee State Park in 1923.

## LAND DONATION FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Gates was not only involved in the construction of Chuckanut Drive and creation of Larrabee State Park, but during his life in Bellingham he donated land for Arroyo Park, was instrumental in the creation of Fairhaven Park, as well as the construction of Mt. Baker Highway. He loaned the City funds to purchase the first part of the Sehome Arboretum and donated 60 acres for plant experimentation that became the State Bulb Farm (now Bellis Fair Mall), and land at 14th and Harris for the Fairhaven Fire Station.

Gates was a community-minded civic leader, and a modest man who's legacy lives on today.

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Chuckanut Drive, 1930. This photo was taken by Gates' brother-in-law (Mabel's brother), Bert Huntoon, a civil engineer and avid photographer who worked with Gates on many of his public pursuits.

– Photo courtesy of Whatcom Museum 1996.10.12648



Cyrus Gates (right) out checking progress on the construction of Chuckanut Drive, circa 1914. The State's use of convict labor on the project in 1910 had been a failed experiment. Prisoners had little incentive for breaking rocks in the hot sun and laborers were hired from then on.

– Photo by Bert W. Huntoon, courtesy of Whatcom Museum 1995.99.1646